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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/073,063	02/12/2002	Olev Trass	228-082/HRH	2398

1059 7590 06/13/2005

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EXAMINER

TOOMER, CEPHIA D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1714

DATE MAILED: 06/13/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/073,063

Applicant(s)

TRASS ET AL.

Examiner

Cephia D. Toomer

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 March 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 4 and 6-28 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 4, 6-15 and 19-28 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 16-18 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

This Office action is in response to the amendment filed March 23, 2005 in which claims 1-3 and 5 were canceled, claims 4, 8, 15 and 19-24 were amended and claims 27-28 were added. Claims 4 and 6-28 are pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 4, 6, 7-14, 27 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bland (US 6,517,631).

Bland teaches a method of generating a combustion ash composition comprising mixing ash and 10 to about 40% by weight of ash of water and reducing the average pore volume of the ash composition (see abstract; claim 1; col. 4, lines 28-31). Bland teaches that additives may be added to the combustion ash and water to strengthen the ash composition. Such additives include Portland cement, self-cementing ashes and lime (drying agents) (see col. 8, lines 10-13; col. 15, lines 39-48). The ash composition is pelletized (see col. 8, lines 26-30).

Bland teaches that the ash (2000 grams) and water (200 to 800 grams) are mixed in a Hobart mixer or pug mill (having positive transport capacity) at high energy ((see col. 10, lines 20-37). Bland teaches that this high energy mixing reduces the pore

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volume of the ash. The ash material may be combined with coarse wood chips and sawdust (see col. 17, lines 16-26; col. 18, lines 1-22). Bland teaches the limitations of the claims other than the differences that are discussed below.

Bland differs from the claims in that he does not specifically teach that the ash and water are ground. However, because Bland teaches that the mixers reduce the pore volume of the ash, this teaching suggests that the ash is ground to a smaller particle size.

3. Claims 15 and 19-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ehrlich (US 4,411,879).

Ehrlich teaches a method for enhancing the sulfur capture potential of lime in the fluidized bed combustion of coal (see abstract and claim 1). The method comprises mixing partially sulfated limestone from the bed combustor with crushed wet coal (see col. 2, lines 34-40). The partially sulfated limestone is in the fly ash of the flue gas (see col. 2, lines 46-52). If the coal is not wet enough to hydrate the limestone/ash/coal mix then additional water may be added (see col. 4, lines 44-48). Furthermore, Ehrlich teaches to have excess water in the process is not a problem (see col. 3, lines 58-63).

To effect the hydration reaction, the coal and fly ash are mixed at a temperature from about 200 °F to about 400 °F. This may be accomplished without the necessity of an additional heating means since the fly ash will be warm as it is collected from the flue gas (see col. 2, lines 51-60). Ehrlich teaches the limitations of the claims other than the differences that are discussed below.

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In the first aspect, Ehrlich fails to teach grinding of the mixture of ash and wet coal. However, since Ehrlich teaches thoroughly mixing the coal and the mixture is used in the same process these teachings suggests that the mixing done by Ehrlich is sufficient to grind the mixture to the proper consistency, absent evidence to the contrary.

In the second aspect, Ehrlich differs from the claims in that he does not specifically teach the amount of water. However, it would have been obvious to one ordinary skill in the art to optimize this result effective variable because Ehrlich teaches that the amount of water may vary from a stoichiometric amount required to rehydrate the ash to an excess amount.

In the third aspect, Ehrlich differs from the claims in that he does not specifically teach that the mixing is carried out in a mill having positive transport capacity. However, it appears that the mixer of Ehrlich teaches that the ash/coal mixture exits the mixer through line 20 and is fed to the combustor (see col. 4, lines 45-48). This teaching suggests positive transport.

In the fourth aspect, Ehrlich differs from the claims in that he fails to teach that the water/ash/coal mixture is palletized. However, no unobviousness is seen in this difference because the skilled artisan desiring to use the sorbent mixture at a later date or time would palletize to mixture to ensure ease of handling and for storage purposes.


4. Claims 16-18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The prior art fails to teach or suggest adding a drying agent after the completion of the simultaneous grinding and hydrating.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Cephia D. Toomer whose telephone number is 571-272-1126. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vasu Jagannathan can be reached on 571-272-1119. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Cephia D. Toomer
Primary Examiner
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